

The Chase

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Summary: Simba, Nala and Haiba learn of a legend that can resurrect the Pride Lands. But a face from their past wants it too...

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1: The New Home**

AN: It hasn't been too long since the last story, has it? I can't actually remember—and normally I'm pretty good with time. However, the story is here, and that's what matters. Now, go forth and read the... stupidity.

The Chase

Chapter One: The New Home

Simba and his friends had been through hundreds upon hundreds of tragedies in their lives. But perhaps one of the worst was losing their own home, the Pride Lands. After all, that was the place they were used to. All that magnificence. All that beauty. And now it was all gone. Never to return.

Still, Jowai Resort—their *new* home—certainly rivalled the picturesque scenery of the Pride Lands. It was one of the most beautiful places on earth, and now belonged solely to the five of them. It wasn't their own fault—that could be put down to two cannibalistic lionesses known as Scavengers—but they weren't exactly going to complain. After all, it wasn't every day you got to inherit a lush island resort normally reserved for the wealthiest of lions. It was the chance of a lifetime!

"In a way, I'm glad that Jowai Resort has been thoroughly ravaged by cannibalistic lionesses," Haiba said, smiling as he sat beside the river of his glorious new home. "If anything, they've done us a favour. We never would have ended up here if they didn't eat everyone."

"Sometimes, I think you might be a little bit evil yourself," Simba said, staring at him with an unimpressed expression.

"Simba, I'm about as evil as Death," Haiba said, placing a paw sincerely on his chest.

"Oh, okay." It took a few seconds for Simba to register what Haiba had said. "Wait a minute—that just about makes you the evillest cub on earth."

"Well, I was possessed by him," Haiba said. "Maybe I inherited some of his... evilness. Also, who says I'm a cub? I might just be forty-four years old, trapped in a cub's body for all eternity."

Simba just stared at him.

"I'm kidding. Relax," Haiba said reassuringly.

"I hope so," Simba said, craning his neck in the direction of Nala. She was floating across the river gently on her back.

"Nala, what are you doing?"

She had her eyes closed. "I'm relaxing, Simba," she replied drowsily. "You should try it sometime—it relaxes the body."

"I don't have time to relax," Simba told her. "I've been thinking."

"That makes a change," she quipped.

"Aren't you supposed to be a supporting, loving mate?" Simba remarked dryly. "After all, we are technically the King and Queen now."

"The King and Queen of what?" Haiba asked sarcastically. "The Dead Lands?"

"No, the King and Queen of... oh, I don't know, Jowai Resort," Simba said quickly. It was the first thing that popped into his head. After all, it wasn't like he could say the Pride Lands anymore. They were long since gone.

"There are no kings or queens of Jowai Resort," Haiba said, almost managing to sound offended. "This place is its own mistress."

"What the heck are you talking about?" Simba exclaimed, not understanding a word Haiba had uttered.

"It's in charge of itself," Haiba said. "A throbbing haven of peace and love."

Nala jerked her head upwards, gawping at Haiba. "I think he's been out in the sun too long," she said. "He's lost his mind."

"I just ache for the love of a decent female," Haiba pined. "I mean, it's been—what?—two, three hours since my last kiss."

"Two or three hours?" Nala said slowly. "There's no one here to kiss."

"Well... I may have snatched a kiss or two from you in your sleep," Haiba said nervously. "Simba, too."

"What?"

"I'm sorry—I was desperate!" Haiba cried. "What else is a lonely cub like me supposed to do? I deserve thousands upon thousands of lionesses to kiss! Otherwise, what's the point? The only thing that matters is love!"

"Simba, knock him out," Nala ordered.

"Well said," Simba agreed, before thwacking Haiba across the cheek with a small stone. He did nothing.

"Was that your best shot?" Haiba challenged. "I'll tear you limb from limb, you demon from the depths of... that place under the ground!" He leapt at Simba, only to miss him by several feet. "Where'd the ground go...?"

"Has everyone lost their mind today?" Simba grumbled.

"Probably," Nala responded.

"How *dare* you!" sounded a voice from behind the three cubs. "I don't understand how you could be so blindingly stupid to commit such a despicable act!"

"Don't use your big words on me, birdie!"

"Birdie? Well, I've never..."

Simba and Nala turned to see Zazu and Sarafina arguing over a nearby tree. "What are they doing?" Nala asked in bemusement. "Simba, go see what's going on."

"What? Why me?" Simba complained.

"Because I'm still relaxing," Nala said. "Now, go!"

"Fine." Simba padded over to Sarafina and Zazu, who were glaring daggers at each others. "What are you arguing about?"

"She stole my favourite tree!" Zazu accused, pointing at Sarafina.

"For a start, birdbrain, it's not *your* tree," Sarafina told him, "and I didn't steal it. It's merely the place where I like to sleep."

"Well, I'm sorry, but you'll simply have to find another tree to sleep under," Zazu replied. "This one is occupied."

"I can't believe this," Simba said, staring in disbelief at the situation. "You're acting like cubs. Not even that—like *babies*."

"I only feel that this new home of ours should come with a certain element of control," Zazu responded. "In short: I should be the new ruler of this place."

Simba burst out laughing at this, rolling around on the ground. "You! Ruler! That's a good one!"

"I don't see why not," Zazu said. "After all, I am by far the oldest of the group."

Simba narrowed his eyes in suspicion. "The last time we talked about your age, you said you were barely past your teenage years."

"Well... um... that is beside the point," Zazu stammered. "I should still be the all-powerful King of Jowai Resort."

"Don't listen to him," Sarafina snapped. "*I'm* the oldest of the group—you're talking to the lioness who gave birth to your girlfriend."

"Simba, do not listen to that charlatan," Zazu told him. "*I'm* the hornbill who gave birth to your girlfriend."

"I can't begin to tell you how many things are wrong with that sentence," Simba said. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to figure out why everyone's lost their mind. Before I lose mine, too..."

He strode back over to Nala. "Did you find out what they're arguing about?" she asked.

"They're arguing over a tree, Haiba's gone insane, and I think I might follow him," Simba said. He sighed. "Just another day in paradise."

"Right, that's it," Nala decided, swimming over to the edge. "Come on. We're going for a walk."

"Why?" Simba asked.

"To get away from all this craziness," Nala said, shaking herself dry once she got out of the river. "I just don't get what's going on with everyone this morning."

Simba shrugged. "Must be adjusting to the new... climate," he said, straining to find the right word.

"Climate?" Nala said, giving him a funny look. "How's that supposed to work? Everything's the same wherever we go. It's always hot and the sun is always shining. It only ever rains once a year."

"All right, I get it," Simba said. "Let's just go."

Simba and Nala walked away, leaving Zazu and Sarafina squabbling at each other. Haiba pointed at them as they left, laughing at the top of their voice. "They're going off to kiss!" he giggled. "It's funny 'cause it's true!"

Simba and Nala rolled their eyes and left the resort.

From behind a set of trees, three shadows watched them go from the darkness.

"They're leaving," a voice said.

"I can see that, dummy," another snapped. "What, did you think I was blind?"

"I was only saying," the voice replied meekly.

"Both of you, shut up," another voice snapped. "It looks like my secret weapon to drive them insane worked." He chuckled. "This is our chance to destroy Simba and his friends once and for all!"

"Destroy Simba and his friends once and for all? Why would you want to do that?"

"Because, Ndugu, he's ruined my life," replied the voice. "But I've already told you that nine thousand times already."

"Well, I'm sorry for having short-term memory loss," said Ndugu. "By the way, who are you?"

It took the leader of the three all his strength not to slap Ndugu. "Dada, shut your brother up."

"*You* shut him up," Dada said. "It's not my job just because we're related. I don't even know who he is. I have *long-term* memory loss."

Their leader sighed. "This is going to be quite a long day."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: The Ambush

Chapter Two: The Ambush

"All right, so what were you thinking about?" Nala asked, as she and Simba walked through a quaint area of the jungle.

"Huh?" He didn't understand.

"You told me earlier you were thinking about something," Nala said. "What was it?"

"Um..." Simba suddenly seemed nervous. "Well... you know the... Pride Lands?"

"Hmm, let me think..." Nala put on a look of mock thought. "Oh, yes—that place where we used to live before it blew up in fiery lava."

"Actually, it didn't blow up," Simba said. "It kinda melted."

"Why were you thinking about the Pride Lands, anyway?" Nala asked. "Look, Simba, if it's about you not being the future King anymore, then—"

"I want to bring our home back," Simba revealed, prompting a gasp from Nala, as if such a thing were forbidden.

"Bring the Pride Lands back?" Nala exclaimed. "Simba, that's impossible. It's unthinkable. It's—"

"Come on, Nala," Simba interrupted, rolling his eyes. "Think of all the weird... stuff that's out there. Hago wanted to live for ever, Death wanted to rule the world; isn't there one little thing that can bring our home back?"

"You're talking about a legend," Nala presumed.

"Yeah—something like that," Simba agreed, nodding eagerly. "We just need to... ask around. See if anyone knows anything. There's bound to be something. We can do it. We can bring the Pride Lands back."

"I don't know," Nala said sceptically. "This just doesn't sound right to me. We could be playing with fire."

Simba whipped round in surprise. "Where? Is something burning?"

"It's an expression," Nala said. "'Playing with fire' means that we could be messing with something dangerous. You've seen what happened to the bad guys—all their plans went up in smoke. Which is another expression to do with fire, actually. That's quite interesting."

"Enough of fires and smoke," Simba said. "I just want us to have somewhere where we can live out the rest of our lives. Together."

"We *have* somewhere to live out the rest of our lives," Nala said. "One of the best places to live for miles and miles."

"But it's... it's just not the same," Simba sighed. "Ever since my parents died, it's always felt like something's missing."

"You're still upset about it," Nala told him. "*That's* what's missing." She understood his grief. After all, she had never known her own father. That was quite sad in itself. But when she discovered the truth about him, the pain pretty much went away, and now she kept her mouth shut about it. Even her mother didn't know the truth. But that was for the best.

"Our home would have been the only memory I had left of them," Simba said sadly. "Now, I just have... nothing."

"You have me," Nala said, placing a paw on his shoulder. She smiled warmly at him. "Isn't that enough?"

Simba stared into her teal eyes, a hollow look in his own. Then he spoke the answer.

"I don't know."

Wham!

Before any of them could react, Simba was pounced upon by a cub with dark brown fur and green eyes. He screamed. "*Who the heck are you?*"

"*Beware!*" screamed the cub, grabbing Simba by the neck. "*Beware!*"

"Whoa, whoa!" Simba said, trying to back away from the cub. "What are we supposed to beware?"

The cub goggled at them with wide, terrified eyes. "They're everywhere!" he cried, looking all around. "They've come for me! They're trying to get me!" He dropped to the ground, cowering in terror. "*You can't hide from them!*"

"I think you need to calm down," Nala said, stepping carefully over to the cub. "Why don't you just tell us who you are and what's going on?"

"They're everywhere!" the cub yelled again. "They'll get me—and then they'll come for *you*, too!" He pointed with a shaky claw at Nala's chest. He broke down in sobs. "We're all dead..."

Simba and Nala just stared at each other. This was unlike anything they had ever seen before. What kind of a monster—or *monsters*, it seemed—could cause a cub to be so petrified? It was unreal.

"It's okay," Nala assured him, patting him gently on the shoulder. "Just tell us. What is your name?"

"Ugaidi," he mumbled, rolling around in fear. "They're going to kill us... kill us *all*..." He began to giggle insanely. "And there's nothing you can do!"

"Who are they?" Simba demanded, grabbing Ugaidi roughly by the shoulders. "I've had just about enough of your cowardliness."

"They have no name," Ugaidi said, pushing his face up against Simba's. "They're monsters! They'll rip you to shreds! Then they'll eat us! Painful digestion that'll last ten thousand years!"

"Those are some serious stomach problems," Nala remarked.

"No one's going to eat us," Simba said, tearing away from Ugaidi. "It's clear that you're just very distressed and afraid."

"Yes—distressed and afraid of the cub-eating monsters," Nala said with a smile.

"Come with us," Simba said. "You'll be safe."

Ugaidi shook his head rapidly. "N-n-no," he mumbled. "You could be traitors. The monsters in disguise! This is all just a trap, isn't it? *One big trap!*" He ran around in circles, screaming at the top of his voice.

"If Haiba is insane, then what does that make this guy?" Nala asked, pointing to the crazy cub. "*Super* insane?"

"This isn't the time for jokes, Nala," Simba told her. "Something is causing everyone to go crazy. Maybe it is these monsters, after all..." He thought for a moment. "Hmm. We'll need to find a way to knock him out so we can ask him some questions back at the resort."

Nala picked up a rock and hurled it at Ugaidi. It hit him right on the head, knocking him unconscious instantly. "Problem solved."

"Well, it wasn't very nice, but it gets the job done," Simba said, striding over to the cub. "I'll put him on my back, and then we can take him back to the resort." He placed Ugaidi over his back, before heading in the direction of Jowai Resort. "Come on. We'd better tell the others."

As they began to leave, three figures jumped out from the bushes, nearly scaring Simba and Nala to death!

"The monsters!" Nala cried.

"It's just three cubs," Simba sighed, relieved that there weren't any monsters, after all. "I hardly think that they're going to murder us."

"That's where you're wrong," one of the cubs said. It was apparent that he was the leader of the three. "Because actually, we *are* going to murder you."

"Wait, just who are you?" Simba asked. He then narrowed his eyes. "Wait a minute... I know who you are!"

The cub didn't seem too sure. "Really? Well, I somehow doubt that you would ever know—"

"Aibu?" Simba interrupted, starting at the cub in surprise. "What are you doing all the way out here?"

Aibu was a friend of Haiba's cousin, Binamu. After an unfortunate incident which had claimed the life of not only Binamu

but another cub, Aibu was the sole survivor.

"I'm here to destroy you!" Aibu exclaimed, pointing angrily at Simba and Nala. It was quite apparent that he had changed in recent times...

"I thought you had a free membership for Jowai Resort," Simba said. Realisation dawned on him. "Oh, wait. That's right..."

"My home is dead!" Aibu exclaimed. "Those lionesses ravaged the resort and ate everyone. Except for me, of course. I managed to escape—so I could take my revenge out on you!"

"Us?" Nala said. "But we didn't do anything!"

"Yes, you did," Aibu retorted. "You know very well as much as I do that as soon as you got rid of those lionesses, you decided to just move right on into the resort. You didn't spare one single thought for those who had died. As long as it was in your best interests, then you just didn't care. You're selfish."

"He has a point," Simba said.

"Don't agree with the bad guys, Simba," Nala told him. "Look, Aibu, we're sorry. You can come and live with us if you want."

"I don't *want* to live with selfish cubs like you!" Aibu spat. "I want my home back—and I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that *you* are buried six feet underneath the ground!"

"Wow. Six feet," said the male cub beside Aibu. "That's almost seven!"

"Shut up, Ndugu," Aibu snapped. "This doesn't concern you."

"So who are these two clowns?" Nala asked, pointing to the two cubs. "They escape from the resort, too?"

"No," Aibu said. "I found them 'abandoned' by their parents."

"Wait a sec," Nala said suspiciously. "You killed their parents, didn't you?"

"You could say that," Aibu replied casually, as if he didn't care. "I did inherit some of the Jowai Resort lionesses' psychotic tendencies. I'm a much different cub to the one you once knew."

"Hey—I didn't know we have parents!" Dada, the female cub, exclaimed. "Isn't that interesting?"

Ndugu just stared at her. "And you are?"

"What's up with them?" Nala asked.

"They have memory loss," Aibu explained. "Dada has long-term memory loss, while Ndugu has short-term memory loss. It's not the best help one could ask for, but I can use what I'm given."

"You're just evil," Nala said. "How could you be so cruel to kill two cubs' parents?"

"Aw, they wouldn't remember their parents, anyway," Aibu said. "Now, prepare to die!"

AN: Any of you remember Aibu? He's quite different from who he was in *Survival*. But I suppose Jowai Resort can change anyone, when given the time. Looks like he's not happy about Simba and his friends moving into his former home. Will this cliffhanger ever be resolved? If I don't die beforehand, then yes.

Also, for those of you who might be interested, then I've started a new forum on the site: The Lion King Adventures Forum. I've been thinking about making one for a while, so I might as well. It's a sort of place where you can talk, discuss my horrible stories, share ideas, say funny things, and even ask me pointless questions! Go on—get involved! We're all a community, aren't we? After all, if you don't join, then I will find you, and I will kill you. Just saying.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Prepare to Die

AN: Hey, all! I'm back for more with two chapters of this admittedly mysterious story. There are monsters, insane cubs, and Aibu is out for revenge! Well, hopefully things will become a bit clearer after reading the next two chapters...

Haradion: I think all the characters are playing with fire in their own little way. Things are pretty bleak, but you can't say I haven't lost my sense of morbidly dark humour.

Greg M 94: You loved Aibu, eh? Well, sorry to turn him into a mass-murdering psychopath, but it's my duty as a fan fiction writer to twist all of my characters into evil wretches.

anonymous13: Has no one ever explored the relationship between Sarafina and Zazu? I never really thought about how original it was when I was writing them interacting together.

Chapter Three: Prepare to Die

"And just how do you plan on killing us?" Much like Simba, Nala was very good in the 'stalling the bad guys' department. She had opened her mouth at the very last second before Aibu got ready to pounce at them. Maybe she could trick him, somehow. After all, it had worked for Simba with the Scavengers. And they ate each other...

"Yeah," Simba agreed, quickly catching on to Nala's idea. "We've heard the whole 'prepare to die' things hundreds of times. No one's ever actually told us *how* they're gonna do it. So tell us."

"And it'd better not be boring," Nala threatened, glaring intently at Aibu. "If your execution of us isn't good enough, then I might have to kill you."

Startled for a moment, Aibu shook his head. "Fine," he grumbled. "Well, first I was gonna start with—"

Thump!

At exactly the same time, Simba and Nala pushed Aibu right into a tree, before sprinting off in the direction of Jowai Resort. Regardless of whether it was Aibu's home or theirs, they had to get back and discover what had freaked Ugaidi out to the point of extreme insanity. Something was going on in the jungle, and it wasn't pretty...

"Darn it!" Aibu yelled, hitting the ground in frustration as the two cubs escaped from the area. "Ndugu, Dada—get after them!"

Ndugu smiled blankly at Aibu. "Who are you?"

"That's our boss, stupid," Dada said, hitting him on the shoulder.

"Oh." Ndugu looked up at Dada. "Well, who are you, then?"

"Enough of this nonsense!" Aibu roared, climbing to his paws.

His insides were burning with quiet fury; he was just *itching* to destroy Simba, Nala and Haiba. They had taken everything from him—it was only fair that he did the same in return. They were going to wither and die. And he would make sure that it was painful...

"I want Simba and his stupid friends dead! Deceased! Killed! Murdered! Eviscerated! Slaughtered! Slain! Destroyed! Exterminated! Eradicated! Assassinated! Massacred! Dispatched! They can rot in *hell*!"

"So you want them alive?" Ndugu asked.

Aibu grabbed Ndugu by the throat, throttling him roughly. "You'd better get that memory of yours back into shape, or so help me, I'll eat you!"

"Certainly, Mr..." Ndugu just stared at Aibu. "Wait, what's your name, again?"

Aibu rolled his eyes and threw Ndugu to the ground. "I can't take much more of this," he whined. "Of all the assistants to have, I get the ones with bad long- and short-term memory. This is horrendous!"

Dada smiled up at her leader. Even though she knew absolutely nothing about her past, she was still smart enough to understand what was happening around her. "It's okay, boss—I have a plan!"

"Oh, really?" asked Aibu, not really sounding convinced. "I'd be delighted to hear this *thoroughly intelligent* idea that you have for me."

"Well, here it is," Dada announced, clearing her throat. "We should find the cubs and... *feed them to the monsters*." She spoke the last part in a low, sinister voice.

"The monsters?" squawked Aibu. Even *he* sounded slightly frightened by the idea. "But—but they're monsters!"

"I know." Dada's smile widened. "That's the point. We can lead them right into a trap. Then the monsters can take over and swallow them whole!"

Aibu frowned. "I don't think this is a good idea," he confessed. "We don't know anything about the monsters. What if they decide to eat *us* instead of them?"

"Don't be such a scaredy cat," Dada said. "Don't *you* like the plan, Ndugu?"

Ndugu stared up at his sister, a dumb smile on his face. "I wish I wish I was a fish," he replied.

Still looking unsure of himself, Aibu frowned at Dada. "Fine. We'll go with your stupid plan—but don't expect me to help you out when the monsters have their sharp teeth around your throats!"

"I wish I knew what a throat was," Ndugu said.

"Is it hot in here or am I just absolutely terrified?" Haiba asked, pacing back and forth nervously around the edge of the river. First he felt all hyper and crazy this morning, and now he was practically jumping with fear! What was going on? "Any thoughts, Sarafina, you seductive lioness who fell from heaven?"

"That's... very flattering, Haiba," Sarafina started. "But I think you should know that I'm not very interested in marrying you." *Although*, she neglected to admit, *he is rather charming*...

"Okay, okay—so maybe I would cheat on you within five minutes of our marriage," Haiba said. "But it would be a *good* five minutes! Full of love and compassion! Right up until I probably end up making out with a rock!"

"I must admit to feeling rather petrified myself," Zazu said, nervously looking left and right from his perch on the branch of a tree. There as an aura of unpleasantness hanging in the air. He could sense it. Something was going on—but he couldn't quite fathom what it was... "I don't understand anything."

"I think I may be able to shed some light on the situation," Simba offered, stepping into the resort with Ugaidi on his back and Nala right beside him. "Look what we've found!"

"Ooh—dinner!" Haiba cried, his eyes lighting up at the sight of Ugaidi. "I've never had fried cub before! This should be interesting!"

"You're still acting crazy," Nala said.

"Sorry," he apologised, looking panicked. "I don't understand what's wrong with us today. First we're crazy, then we're terrified, and then we're—"

"Insane!"

Ugaidi's eyes snapped open, leaping off Simba's back and looking frantically around the resort. He looked extremely unstable, ready to burst at any second. In fact, he probably would.

"They're here! They're here! Coming for us!" Ugaidi exclaimed, giving the impression of absolute terror. "They're here for it! It will seal our doom! *We're all going to die!*"

"I don't know what the heck he's talking about," Nala said, staring bemusedly at the ranting cub. "He's saying we're all gonna die, but he's not *explaining* it."

"I think I could help us," Haiba offered. "With an incredibly useful technique that will get us out of trouble in no time."

"Let me guess: a Grand Lands trick?" Nala guessed.

"You got it," Haiba replied, winking at her. "I call this one... the Grand Lands Entrancement. With it, we can lull the cub into a peaceful trance where we can question him without fear of him jumping all around the place like a cub with a stick

up his butt."

"Well, use it, then," Nala said, staring with wide eyes at Ugaidi. He was rolling back and forth on the ground, twisting in screaming agony. To say the least, it looked incredibly disturbing. "I think the poor guy's going to pop."

"Very well." Haiba strode over to Ugaidi, placing both forepaws over his temples. The cub immediately ceased screaming, eyes closing, gently falling onto his back. For someone who was once a ranting, screaming wreck, Ugaidi looked incredibly peaceful. "There. Now we can question him."

"This had better be safe," Simba grumbled, walking over to the comatose Ugaidi. "Um, hello there. What's your name?"

"Ugaidi," he replied in a soft, quiet voice, eyes still shut.

"We already know that," Nala said.

"All right—I'm only a beginner, you know!" Simba snapped, before turning back to Ugaidi. "Now, where do you come from?"

"The Horror Lands," he replied, prompting confused expressions from Simba, Nala, Sarafina and Zazu.

Haiba grimaced. "Ooh—nasty place, the Horror Lands. There's someone you don't want to live the rest of your life."

"Why's that?" Nala asked, curious.

"Well—" Haiba began, but Ugaidi interrupted him.

"It is a horrible place," he said. "Small. Cramped. Ravaged by predators. Incredibly low population. Until..."

"Until *what*?" Simba pressed.

"The creatures came," Ugaidi replied.

"What kind of creatures?" Simba asked.

"The most horrible you can possibly imagine," said Ugaidi chillingly. "They took everyone. Tortured us until we could barely move."

"What happened to your pride?" Nala asked softly.

"I am the only survivor," Ugaidi explained, causing the rest of them to feel a pang of sorrow for the poor cub. "I barely managed to escape."

"But I don't understand," Sarafina said, still looking a little confused. "Why would these creatures—whatever they are—want to kill your entire pride?"

"They are looking for something," Ugaidi said. "They want information."

"Information about what?" Haiba asked.

"About the Roho."

"The Roho?" Nala exclaimed, looking to Simba for help. But he shook his head. He didn't know either.

Haiba, however, was able to provide some helpful assistance. "It means 'spirit'," he explained.

"What's the Roho?" Simba inquired, looking back at Ugaidi.

"It is said that the Roho—who resides in the Dark Caves—can resurrect anything and anyone at will," Ugaidi told them. "Whatever your heart desires."

Simba's eyes lit up upon hearing that. "Whatever your heart desires, eh?"

A sneaky smile spread across his face.

Because now he knew that he could bring back the Pride Lands.

***Chapter 4*: Chapter 4: Aibu the Arrogant**

Chapter Four: Aibu the Arrogant

Nala was quick to confront Simba, noticing that mischievous glint in his eyes. She hadn't seen that glint in a long while. It always meant that he was up to something sneaky and—if you looked deep enough—slightly evil.

"Simba, I know what you're thinking," she told him. "You can't bring back the Pride Lands with the help of this... this Roho. It's crazy!"

"Nala, it's brilliant!" Simba said, a wide excited smile on his face. "We can bring our home back! We can have a kingdom!"

"Oh, come on," Nala said. "That cub doesn't even know what he's talking about—he's lost his mind."

"I beg to disagree," Haiba interjected, much to Nala's annoyance. "The Grand Lands Entrancement allows those under its influence to speak only from their inner soul. He wasn't insane when he said that."

"Whose side are you on?" Nala asked him angrily. "Thanks to your stupid Grand Lands trick, now Simba is going to try to get the Pride Lands back through some dangerous stunt!"

"The creatures surround the Dark Caves," Ugaidi whispered, still stuck in the trance. "They want the Roho for themselves. None who enter shall ever return."

"So it's a bit of a risk—but it's a risk I'm willing to take!" Simba exclaimed.

"Look, whatever those monsters are, they'll kill us if we try anything," Nala said. "Besides, we don't even know where the Dark Caves are."

"Two hundred paces in a northerly direction," Ugaidi told them.

Nala started to growl with fury. "Shut up!" she snapped at the cub. "Simba, you're not going, and that's that!"

"You can't tell me what to do," Simba said stubbornly. "I'm the King—you're the Queen! You listen to *me*!"

"How *dare* you!" Zazu yelled in outrage. "I've never heard of such rudeness!"

"Has it ever occurred to any of you that whatever made us go crazy and frightened earlier is starting to affect us again?" Haiba suggested.

A look of realisation suddenly spread across Nala's face. "Oh, no."

"Oh, yes!"

They all turned to see Aibu and his two assistants arrive on the scene. He had an evil smile on his face, as if they'd fallen right into one of his traps. "I think you'll find that my secret weapon works incredibly well."

"*Your* secret weapon?" Nala exclaimed, raising an eyebrow. "And I thought it was something to do with these creatures..."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Aibu, dismissing his theory. "The distortion of your minds is the side-effect of a plant I found while trekking through the jungle. I just released it into the water supply while you were sleeping."

"Like that love potion Shocker tried to use on us?" Simba theorised. That was certainly one of his more interesting adventures...

"But I don't understand," Nala said, staring at the river. It hadn't changed its colour one bit. "The river still looks the same."

"Oh, yes," Aibu said, looking incredibly pleased with himself. "Since I'm so smart and great and cool, I managed to develop a colourless solution that would fool unintelligent life forms such as yourselves."

"So what does it do?" Simba demanded.

"Your judgement has become significantly clouded," Aibu said, his smile widening. "Before you know it, you'll start to turn on each other. Make stupid decisions. And then..." he paused for dramatic effect, "you might just walk right into the monsters!" He let out an evil laugh that really didn't suit him.

Ndugu giggled along with Aibu. "I don't know what any of you are talking about," he said.

"I can't believe I let scum like you hang around with my cousin," Haiba said angrily. "I really feel like impaling him on a cactus. Who's with me?"

"Let's just knock him out," Nala said, stepping towards the corrupted cub. "Then we can deal with this whole 'creature' thing."

"You won't be knocking me out anytime soon," Aibu told them. "I'm far too clever to be defeated by the likes of you. You're going to be swallowed up by the monsters, while I use the Roho to bring Jowai Resort back to its former glory!"

"Wait, *what*?" Simba exclaimed, astounded by his plans. "What do you mean?"

"I *mean* that I'm going to get rid of you and then bring back my home and everyone in it!" Aibu explained. "Have you got a problem with that?"

"Yeah—I *do*, actually," Simba said, courageously taking a step towards the evil cub. "Because *I'm* going to bring back *my* home, and there's not a single thing you can do about it!"

"We'll see about that, Simba," Aibu said. "We shall see. After all, your foolishness will cause you to turn on your own companions—and then you'll be eaten alive!" He chuckled. "Face it: you're just not as smart as me."

"I really don't like arrogance," Nala said, extending her claws at Aibu. "It's something I have very little tolerance for."

"Yeah," Haiba agreed. "I mean, seriously. Could you be any more of an arrogant fool?"

Aibu rolled his eyes, unfazed in the slightest. "I hate animals who are so much lesser than me. Although once I get my home back, with the help of the Roho I'll be able to exterminate evil single animal that I don't like! Only the strongest—namely, *me*—shall survive!"

"Do you want me to kill him?" Sarafina offered. "He's getting on *my* nerves, too."

"No one can kill me," Aibu said. "Let's get out of here," he said to Ndugu and Dada. "We're off to find the Roho. You guys can stay here and kill each other." He laughed again as he walked off into the distance.

"That's it!" Nala went to leap after him, but Haiba held her back.

"Nala, no!" he said. "There's no point going after him! We've still got other things to figure out!"

"Don't you tell me what to do, you commoner!" Nala spat.

Haiba just stared at her, puzzled. "*Commoner*?"

"Yeah! You heard me! I'm the Queen around here—you're just a servant!" Nala raged.

"It's started already," Zazu despaired. "We're already starting to turn against each other—just like that disgustingly arrogant cub said!"

Nala shook her head, trying to snap herself out of her sudden bout of rage. "I'm sorry," she said. "I don't know what came over me."

"I can feel it," Simba said, tugging at the tuft of fur on top of his head. "Getting into my head. Whatever he put into the water, it isn't good."

"We'll just have to try and fight it," Haiba said. "While we try and get to the Roho before he does."

"So we *are* going after the Roho?" Nala asked. "It sounds like some kind of deadly trap."

"Of course we're going after it," Simba chimed in. "I'm not letting him get his greedy paws on the Roho! If anyone deserves it, then it's us, right?"

"Definitely," Nala agreed. "Plus we need to stop those creatures from killing any more animals."

"But what would those creatures want with the Roho?" Sarafina asked. "What kind of things do monsters like to resurrect?"

But none of them had an answer for that.

Aibu whistled merrily as he walked along the jungle, safe in the knowledge that Simba and his friends would rip each other to shreds before ever coming after him. He was more than confident that he would find the Roho and resurrect Jowai Resort before anyone could stop him. All he had to do was keep a close eye on the creatures and he'd be home free.

"Hey, maybe once we get this thingamajig, we can bring our parents back!" Dada exclaimed happily, walking alongside her leader. She didn't know who her parents were, but she very much wanted to find out.

"Don't be silly," Aibu said. "You don't need your parents back. I am your guardian now!"

"Can I at least bring my memory back?" Dada asked meekly.

"No! What do you need that for?" he snapped.

"I have an important question!" Ndugu announced, causing Aibu and Dada to stop dead.

"Fine," said Aibu. "What is it?"

"Who are you?"

Aibu just frowned. "Decision made: I'm killing him."

With that, he slashed Ndugu across the throat. He grinned widely as he watched the cub writhe about on the ground, struggling for breath as a neverending torrent of blood escaped the deep gash in his throat. He gagged several times, clearly in distress, and then was motionless.

Ndugu was dead.

Dada stared at her dead brother, horrified. "You killed him," she gasped, gaping at Aibu. "You killed him! *You killed my brother!*"

"Don't be ridiculous," Aibu said, knowing that he could easily play into the cub's disabilities. "He was never really your brother."

"What? I—I don't believe you," Dada stammered.

But it was too late. She had already fallen right into his trap.

"Of course he wasn't," Aibu assured her. "I just felt sorry that you had such a bad long-term memory, so I *pretended* that he was your brother. To make you feel better."

"Oh." Dada then smiled. "Well, that's okay, then. He was pretty stupid, anyway."

"I know," Aibu said. "Now, come on. We don't want to waste any more time."

Aibu and Dada continued on through the jungle, heading towards the Dark Caves.

They didn't look back at the dead Ndugu.

Not once.

AN: Anyone expect that sudden death? Aibu seems to be getting worse and worse, doesn't he? I think Simba, Nala and Haiba had better put a stop to his plans before he gets his dirty paws on the Roho! But the mystery of the creatures still remain... However, it will all come together soon enough, so be back here for the next two chapters!

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: The Dark Caves

AN: It's that horrible time again where I update with two new chapters. Will Simba, Nala and Haiba find the Roho before Aibu does? Read on and find out...

Haradion: Shadowlings? What an interesting name. But then these creatures of mine don't have names. All the best ones don't.

kora22: Aibu is just horrible. I love completely changing everyone's opinion of him, though. I'll just make him worse and worse and worse...

anonymous13: Roho does indeed mean "spirit" in Swahili. And I think Aibu is much worse than Hila, too. I saw *Brave* last year in the cinema. I liked it—even if the plot was a bit farfetched—but it did have some silly moments that it could have done without. Not one of Pixar's best, in my opinion.

Chapter Five: The Dark Caves

Aibu had everything all planned out now. No one could stop him, seeing as he was the greatest life form to ever grace the earth. Everything seemed so simple—and all the outcomes would end with nothing more than certain victory for him. Once he found the Roho, everything would fall into place... All of his dreams would come true.

"I can smell it," Aibu said, almost grinning with ecstatic delight as he stalked through the jungle. "Victory is in sight."

"What does victory smell like? I've never seen it before," Dada said. For a cub who had just seen her brother violently murdered right in front of her, she was taking it rather well. But then Aibu was clever. He had preyed on her weaknesses, and that was why he always succeeded. The same applied for Simba and his friends. *Their* weakness was the fact that they would soon turn on each other, most likely tearing themselves to shreds. It was all perfect. Almost *too* perfect...

"Shut up," Aibu snarled. "You will speak when spoken to." He wasn't interested in hearing the stupid cub talk any longer. She was pathetic. And as soon as her usefulness had run out, then she would be eliminated—just like her brother...

Aibu pressed on forwards, knowing that the Dark Caves where the Roho resided would soon be in sight. He listened out for any sign of the creatures, but there was not a sound to be heard. Maybe they had finally seen sense and recognised that a cub of true greatness was in their presence, so they were clearing a safe path for him...

"Where are the monsters, boss?" Dada asked, seemingly forgetting that she wasn't allowed to speak unless spoken to.

"I told you to shut up," snapped Aibu, only becoming angrier. "It's obvious that the monsters are proud to have me in their presence, so they're allowing me to pass through the area. Then I can grab the Roho, and bring back whatever I want—before clearing the earth of *all* who are lesser than me!"

"Well, what's in it for me?" Dada asked. "I'm not like my brother—I mean, my *fake* brother. My memory's not scrambled. Well, my *short-term* memory, at least."

"I'll decide what you'll have and what you'll won't," Aibu replied, neglecting to mention that she most likely wouldn't live through the next hour. There was only room for *one* all-powerful cub in this jungle!

"Oh. Okay," said Dada quietly, unaware of what Aibu was planning to do with her. She just wasn't smart enough to understand that he was a psychopath now—nothing like the cub Simba and his friends once knew—and would stop at nothing in order to get what he wanted. In short: he was a monster. "I'll just shut up, then."

"Good." The mass of trees in front of the two cubs opened up into a massive clearing, surrounded on all sides by huge grassy slopes. Facing them was a wide opening to the bleak—and aptly named—Dark Caves.

But still there were no creatures.

"We made it." Aibu grinned, stepping carefully towards the entrance. "I knew that the creatures wouldn't dare to attack me. I'm just too good..."

Unbeknownst to him, three *other* cubs were watching Aibu from behind a tree, having followed him all the way to the Dark Caves.

"I'm surprised he never spotted us," Nala whispered, poking her head around the side of the tree to get a good look at

Aibu approaching the Dark Caves. "Too busy talking about himself, I bet."

"Is that a reference to my intelligence?" Haiba snapped, glaring at her angrily.

"You're getting all angry again," Simba reminded him. "We don't want to turn on each other, right?"

"Hmm," Nala agreed. "It's lucky we left my mother and Zazu behind—I bet they're at each other's throats right now." She knew how her mother and Zazu liked to argue quite a lot. They weren't exactly the best of friends...

"Let's just find Aibu and beat the living heck out of him," Haiba suggested. "Then he won't be able to get his paws on the Roho."

"How are we supposed to do that without him seeing us?" Simba wondered. "Maybe we should just wait for him to go into the cave—then we can ambush him and steal the Roho."

"That's a good plan," Nala said. "As long as the creatures don't show up or something stupid like that, right?"

They all laughed—

—just as a growl sounded from behind them.

Haiba jerked a claw in a backwards direction. "There's something really bad behind us, isn't there?"

Simba and Nala nodded blankly at him, transfixed by the horrific monstrosity that they were now both facing.

Haiba slowly turned around, and let out a high-pitched girly scream as the creatures were finally revealed to them.

There were three of them. Horrible, grey, bulbous things on four legs that looked like a cross between a bear and a lion—only three times as big. Green saliva dripped from their sharp, venomous fangs. Their eyes were glowing an absurd shade of purple. They just looked... wrong.

"Where do all these guys come from?" Simba asked.

The creature who stood in the centre of the three opened its jaws wide and let out a monstrous roar; it was so powerful that it shook the ground slightly. Simba, Nala and Haiba all laughed nervously at the sight of the furious thing.

"We're gonna die," Haiba said through chuckles.

"I'm laughing 'cause otherwise I'll cry," Nala giggled.

The lead creature scooped Haiba up in one of its enormous paws, almost crushing him with sharp, filthy claws. He screamed. *"Please don't eat me!"*

But his pleas fell on deaf ears, as the creature shrugged and popped Haiba right into its massive mouth.

"I am a genius," Aibu declared as he strode through the dark passageway of the Dark Caves. "Nearly at the Roho and no creatures in sight." He was, of course, unaware that Simba and his friends were encountering the creatures right now...

"Where do you think this Roho is, then?" Dada asked.

"Oh, it'll be somewhere around here," Aibu replied, eyes flickering left and right in the intense darkness. "Since this place is so dark, it'll be easy to spot. They say that the Roho takes the form of a big, bright light. Once we find it, I can have everything that I've ever wanted—and no one will be able to stop me!"

Aibu continued down through the darkness, descending a staircase that curved along the walls. "We're getting close," he said, smiling. "I can sense it. Now nothing will be able to trip us up— *Whoa!*"

Aibu cried out in surprise as he slipped through a hole in the ground, gripping hold of the edge with a single paw just in the nick of time. "Who the heck decided to put this pit here?" he asked, straining to pull himself back up.

Dada stopped right at the edge. "They've set up traps," she said, staring at the pit Aibu was dangling from. "To try and stop—sorry, *kill*—us."

"Just help me up," Aibu ordered, holding a free paw out. Dada grabbed it, hoisting him up to safety. "We'll have to jump over if we want to find the Roho."

"Are you sure it'll be safe?" Dada asked, viewing the pit with worry.

"No," Aibu replied, "but if you don't do it then I'll cut off your head and swallow your eyeballs."

"Point taken," Dada said, before leaping into the air with all her might. She landed hard on the other side of the pit, sliding across the ground on her stomach before coming to a halt at the end of another passageway. Aibu followed her lead, although his landing was far more graceful.

"Now, let's get on with this," Aibu said. "I've just about had enough of being shunted around by idiots like you."

"I'm not an idiot," Dada argued. "I'm just at a disadvantage."

"Any form of weakness makes you an idiot," Aibu informed her. "And it makes you much lesser than me, too. Everyone in the world should be strong, smart and intelligent. Those are the only three qualities that will get you through life without coming across as a born failure."

Dada felt a pang of hatred towards Aibu. How could he be so arrogant? He thought that he was better than everyone else. It just wasn't fair. If anyone was pathetic around here, then it was him. She was even considering just ditching the guy... It wasn't like she *needed* him. Even if her memory wasn't perfect.

Aibu rounded a corner and continued down yet another identical passageway comprised of rock and stone. "There's a dead end up ahead," he noticed. "If you've brought me the wrong way, then you'll be sorry..."

Dada neglected to mention that Aibu had been leading the way, as they both reached the dead end of the passageway. "So, what now?"

Suddenly, a flash of bright white light exploded into existence in front of the two. It was almost blinding in its intensity.

The Roho, Aibu thought in wonderment.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: The Roho

Chapter Six: The Roho

Simba and Nala could only look on horror, rooted to the spot as the creature tasted Haiba thoughtfully. They awaited the deafening *crunch* noise that would signal that their friend was no more, digested by the hulking mass.

Instead, however, a look of puzzlement crossed the creature's face, as if the taste was unsatisfactory. It spat out Haiba, sending him tumbling across the ground until he came to rest below a tree, covered in slimy saliva. He was shaking in utter disgust.

"I've been violated!" he gasped, trembling frantically.

"Haiba! Are you all right?" Nala cried, staring at him in horror.

"What do you think?" he sobbed.

"Uh, guys," Simba said, staring at the creatures. "I think we'd better run."

The creatures—even though it didn't seem they were interested in eating the cubs any longer—were growling angry at them, dripping fangs bared. The three monsters let out blood-curdling roars, long claws extended to their maximum length.

"I'm not moving," Haiba mumbled.

"I'll get him," Nala said, rushing over to Haiba's side and placing him over her back. "Ugh! You're covered in drool!"

"Well, what do you expect?" Haiba shot back, as Nala and Simba sprinted for the cave. He yelped in surprise when the creatures came bounding after them, ready to close in for the kill.

"Faster!" Simba called, as the entrance to the Dark Caves came closer and closer. They leapt through the cave, rolling across the ground as the creatures jumped to catch them. Sadly—for them at least—they failed, unable to fit through the entrance due to their absolutely humongous size.

"That was a close one," Simba said, stumbling to his paws as they continued on through the darkness. "Remind me to use the Roho to kill those things before they can cause any more trouble..."

"Remind *me* to have a good bath," Nala said, unimpressed with having to bear the greasy weight of Haiba on top of her. "Why did you have to get yourself eaten?"

"It's not like I *planned* on it," Haiba said, still shaking from the incident. "I wish they went for you instead."

"Oh, that's comforting!" Nala retorted angrily.

"Guys," Simba said, shushing them. "Stop arguing. We need to find the Roho before Aibu does. He'll use it to kill us as soon as he finds it. I know it."

"Let's just hurry up, then," Nala sighed, running just a little bit quicker through the blackness of the Dark Caves.

Aibu and Dada both stood back from the bright light that was the Roho, shielding their eyes with a paw. It was almost blinding...

"This is it," Aibu said, grinning evilly. "Soon I shall be able to rule the entire world!" He chuckled evilly.

Then, the Roho spoke. It was a soft, pure voice that seemed filled to the brim with power. A voice that could belong only to a god... "*What is it that you desire, children?*" it asked, twinkling brightly with every word it spoke.

Roho cleared his throat, prepared for his list of demands. "I wish to kill the cubs known as Simba, Nala and Haiba," he told it. "Then I want to bring back the great and powerful Jowai Resort. And then, I wish to exterminate everyone on the earth who is a lesser being than me!"

"*I'm afraid your last command will be impossible, child,*" said the Roho.

Aibu frowned. "Why?"

"Because there is no life form on earth who is a lesser being than you," the Roho explained. "You are the lowest of them all."

"What?" Aibu exclaimed in fury. "How dare you insult me! I am the most important cub on earth! I demand that you execute my wishes at once!"

"If you wish, then I could always kill you," the Roho suggested. "After all, there is no one lesser than yourself."

Aibu was almost red with anger. How could this Roho—great and powerful as it was—trick him like this? It was supposed to do everything he asked it to! This was an outrage! A scandal!

"Listen," Aibu said. "You'd better do as you're told. Now, kill Simba, Nala and Haiba before I kill you."

"You cannot kill the Roho," it replied, "for I am not even alive."

"Just do it, you bright flash of stupidity!" Aibu hollered.

"I will not be bullied by the likes of you," the Roho said. "Henceforth, your wishes shall be denied. Goodbye, and have a nice day."

With that, the Roho flashed out of existence. The wall where it once was crumbled to pieces, leaving only a black pit beyond the ledge.

Aibu would never see the Roho ever again.

"I don't believe this!" he exclaimed, almost tearing his fur out in frustration. "All that effort—all that *work*—and for what? *Nothing*. One great big pile of *nothing*!"

"Well, that was unlucky, wasn't it?" Dada said, almost smiling at the sight of Aibu in such pain.

Aibu's head shot upwards, glaring at Dada with intense fury. "You," he said, pointing a claw straight at her. "This is all your fault. You misled me! Made me come all this way for nothing!"

"I had nothing to do with this!" Dada said. "It's all *your* fault!"

"Don't you insult me," Aibu said, before an evil smile spread across his face. "It seems that your usefulness had finally run out."

With a sudden violent motion, Aibu grabbed Dada by the throat, causing her to choke out in surprise. His eyes slowly came to rest on the black pit that rested in front of them.

Dada knew what he was thinking. "No!" she gasped. "Please! You can't!"

"Shut up," Aibu snarled, before grabbing hold of Dada and hurling her into the darkness. She screamed in terror, tumbling down, down, down into the void. Never to be seen again.

Aibu grinned. "Good riddance."

Simba and Nala descended down a stone staircase. It was so dark that they were barely able to see their own paws in front of them. "So whose bright idea was it to make it so dark around here?" Nala asked.

"Maybe to stop animals from discovering the Roho?" Haiba suggested, still clinging to Nala's back. At least he had stopped trembling—although the slobbering drool from the creature that covered him was still pretty sickening...

"Come on—a little bit of darkness isn't going to stop anyone from coming in," Simba said. "You would expect there to be traps or someth— *Whoa!* Who put this pit here?"

Nala and Haiba looked down to see Simba clinging to the edge of a wide pit with both forepaws, claws digging into the ground. "Well, don't just stand there! Help me!"

Nala helped him safely to his paws, still staring at the pit. "So, how are we going to get across with Mr Terrified on my back?"

"Maybe we should just leave it," Haiba said. "Turn around and go back home. Then we can just sleep and forget all about this horrible day."

"The creatures are still out there," Simba reminded him, "and I don't think I'd like to take my chances with them any time soon."

"I wonder why it spat you out," Nala said, slightly perplexed.

"My mother always said I would have tasted horrible if someone tried to eat me," Haiba said, his eyes still filled with fear. "No wonder that cub I dated was reluctant to try kissing with her tongue..."

"We'll figure something out," Simba said. "There has to be *some* way across this pit."

"You won't be crossing this pit," said an all too familiar voice. "You'll be *in* it."

The three cubs looked up to see Aibu. He was stood on the opposite side of the pit, smiling widely. "I can't believe you actually managed to make it this far. Oh, well. At least now I can have my revenge in a much more personal sense."

Nala looked around, surprised to see that Aibu was on his own. "Where are your two lackeys?" she asked.

"Oh, I took care of them," he replied. "Their usefulness didn't last very long, to say the least."

"He really *is* a monster," Simba said. "You're worse than those creatures!"

"Well, I beg to differ," Haiba said. "At least he's not trying to eat us."

"I've had more than enough of your rambling," Aibu said, frowning. "It's time for you to meet your maker!"

AN: Looks like it's time for the final showdown between Aibu and the cubs. You all must really, *really* hate him by now, right? I hope so. He's supposed to be one of the most despicable characters yet. Or maybe you just actually *love* how evil he is. I know how you people like the crazy villains I come up with.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Aibu's Revenge

AN: It's time for the final chapter! And just a day after the last one! I haven't been so bad with updating this story, have I? It's time for the final showdown between Simba, Nala, Haiba and Aibu. Who will prevail?

Haradion: Haiba just doesn't taste good. I don't think anyone would ever like to eat him...

Greg M 94: A world without Haiba is a very bad world indeed. I wouldn't just kill him off without warning like that. I'd kill him off so suddenly that it'd make your head spin...

anonymous13: I do quite sort of enjoy Aibu as a villain, although I hate him just as much as everyone else does. He's just a really unpleasant, heartless monster by now.

Chapter Seven: Aibu's Revenge

"I'm just about sick and tired of you," Simba said, pointing at Aibu. He'd had enough arrogance and evil for one day, thank you very much. Why couldn't this creep just leave them alone? "Now, you'd better give up your stupid revenge scheme—or otherwise we'll have to stop you."

"No one can stop me!" Aibu declared. "And certainly not stupid little cubs such as yourselves. Now, surrender—and I might just kill you painlessly by throwing you down this bottomless pit."

"You won't even get out of here without our help," Simba told him. "Those creatures are guarding the entrance. As soon as they see you, you'll be lying in the bottom of their stomachs. They almost got Haiba."

Aibu glanced at Haiba, still dripping with drool. "Pity," he frowned. "I would have enjoyed seeing you slowly digested over a thousand years."

"I could say the same of you," Simba snapped. "Just why do you think you're better than everyone else, Aibu? You used to be so quiet."

"That Aibu you once knew was pathetic," he responded, seeming to have abandoned his former self. "The *new* me, however, is so much more powerful. I realise now that all of you are pathetic weaklings that need to be squashed like ants. After all, what's the point in having weak forms of life? They don't do anything—so I'm going to get rid of them."

"I can't see something as pure as the Roho having anything to do with you," Haiba said, staring at Aibu with contempt. "You have to be the most pathetic life form in existence."

Aibu snarled at him. "That's what the Roho said," he growled. "And then it disappeared, so now it looks as though I'll have to find *another* way to complete my ultimate plan. But first, I'm going to kill you and then escape safely with my highly valuable life."

"Not if we can help it," said Nala, leaping right for Aibu. She tackled him to the ground, only for him to retaliate with a good hard kick to the stomach. Nala was sent flying into the wall, grunting as she impacted hard with the rocky surface. "Ow."

Aibu laughed. "Your combat skills are awful," he said, before leaping across the pit, striding past Simba and Haiba. "Tata for now, ingrates!"

"Come down here and say that!" Simba threatened, as he disappeared up the staircase. "Great. So now what are we going to do?"

"Let him escape?" Haiba suggested. "I mean, it's not like he has any power now. The guy's a homeless wreck with no manners."

"Yeah—until he finds power somewhere *else* and decides to come back so he can finish us off!" Simba retorted. "Now, let's grab Nala, and then get out of—"

He was interrupted by a bright white flash of light bursting into existence in front of him. It shone so bright that he had to squint at the majestic occurrence. "Whoa... what *is* that?"

"The Roho," Haiba breathed, staring at it in amazement.

"*You cubs are pure indeed,*" said the Roho. "*Much more worthy than that pathetic disgrace known as Aibu.*"

"The Roho?" Simba exclaimed, smiling widely at it. "Then that means that... you can grant us wishes!"

"Yes, *my child*," the Roho replied in its soft tone. *"Whatever your heart desires."*

"Then in that case... can you bring back the Pride Lands?" Simba asked, a hopeful look in his eyes. He was counting on the Roho to make his dream come true and bring back his home... Otherwise there was nothing that could be done.

"I am afraid not," the Roho replied, much to Simba's disappointment. *"There seems to be a powerful magic surrounding the perimeter of that kingdom, preventing me from repairing it. Whoever destroyed it... must have done it for a reason."*

"Oh..." Simba dipped his head, heart sinking into his stomach. "Okay."

"I do know, however, that there's a hermit on the other side of the jungle who might be able to assist you," the Roho told them. *"He knows quite a lot about magic spells."*

"I'll keep that in mind," Simba said, already knowing that he would most likely be following up on that hermit in the near future...

"But if there's anything else you desire, then I'll be happy to grant it," the Roho offered.

"Wait," Haiba said, raising a paw. "Then that means he can get rid of those creatures for us! Whatever they are."

"Those creatures are distant cousins of the Scavengers," the Roho informed them. *"They are always on the prowl around this area, trying to utilise my powers—if they can ever use their brains properly to get in, of course. I've been waiting for someone to wish for me to get rid of them for quite a long time now."*

"Then I wish for you to get rid of them," Simba said.

"Wait, wait, wait," Haiba said. "Not just yet. I have an idea..."

Aibu chuckled to himself as he walked out of the Dark Caves, free at last. "I'll plan my new revenge scheme, and then come right back to finish them off," he told himself. "Of course, I'll need to kidnap some more innocent cubs to use as my slaves... That means more parents need to be killed. Shouldn't be too much of a problem."

"Stop right there, Aibu!"

Aibu looked up to see Simba, Nala and Haiba stood in front of him. "What?" he exclaimed. "How did you—?"

"We're smarter than you may think," Nala said. "And faster, too." She, of course, knew that the Roho had kindly transported them to this area in the time it took to blink...

"And I think it's time that we had some revenge of our own," Haiba said, a sly smile on his face. "You may want to look behind you, Aibu."

Aibu rolled his eyes. "Yeah, right," he frowned. "As if I'm ever going to fall for that trick."

Suddenly, a glob of drool plopped down onto his face. He frowned.

"There's something really bad behind me, isn't there?"

The three cubs smiled and nodded.

Aibu turned around—

—to find one of the creatures snarling down at him, a hungry look in its eyes.

"Oh, no," he gasped, backing away. "Please! I'll do anything! I—"

The creature paid no heed to his pleas, and popped Aibu right into its mouth, crunching him to bits in a matter of seconds. It let out a burp, and Simba and his friends knew that was the last they would ever see of him.

The creature then exploded into nothingness. Haiba had stressed to the Roho not to destroy the creatures until they had eaten Aibu. It seems like the spirit held up its part of the deal—after all, it didn't exactly *like* Aibu...

"Well, there goes another enemy," Haiba said, padding off in the direction of Jowai Resort. Simba and Nala trailed

behind him. "We always get our guy."

"We always get our guy *eaten*," Nala quipped.

"So, what are we going to do about the Pride Lands, Simba?" Haiba called over his shoulder. "The Roho mentioned a hermit guy or something, didn't he?"

"Yep," Simba replied. "Looks like we'll have to go and look for him tomorrow. I wonder if Ugaidi knows anything..."

Haiba slapped a paw to his face. "I almost forgot about him!" he exclaimed. "What are we supposed to do with him? The guy's insane."

"I think we'd better look after him for a while," Nala said. "He'd get into an awful lot of trouble prowling around the jungle yelling at all the animals... I'd say it's for the best to keep him around."

"If you say so," Haiba sighed. "The quest for the Pride Lands continues..."

"It does," Simba agreed, walking alongside him. "I won't stop until we get the kingdom back. Whatever it takes. However far we have to go. We're bringing it back. After all, we're a team, right?"

Nala and Haiba smiled at him.

Yeah. They were a team.

The End

AN: Yes! Aibu's dead! Aibu's dead! Let's all sing a song! I bet you were all just waiting for that moment, weren't you? Wasn't it just satisfying? Of course it was.

Well, sadly, the Roho couldn't resurrect the Pride Lands. But why? What is this 'magical spell' surrounding the kingdom? Who's the hermit? Well, you might just find out next time...

NEXT TIME: Simba, Nala and Haiba pay a visit to an old hermit—but he's not in the best of moods...